

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6-13 and 15-18 are all the claims pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of Claim 14 and Claim 14 has been canceled.

Applicants thank to the Examiner that rejection of Claims 13-14 is withdrawn. The Office Action indicates that Claims 13-14 would be allowable if rewritten in an independent claim format including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Original Claim 14 depends from Claim 1, and, therefore, currently presented Claim 1 incorporating all of the limitations of Claim 14 is now in condition of allowance.

As the amendment brings Claim 1 and its dependent claims in condition of allowance and no new consideration or search is needed, entry of the amendment and reconsideration are requested.

Formal Matters - Request for Rejoinder of Claims 2-4

Preliminarily, in the Office Action Summary, the Examiner states that Claims 1-4 and 6-18 are pending in the application, Claims 2-4 and 16 have been withdrawn from consideration, Claims 13 and 14 have been objected to, and Claims 1, 6-12, 15, 17 and 18 have been rejected.

Applicants request rejoinder of dependent Claims 2-4, which each depend from Claim 1. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate all of the limitations of Claim 14 and is in condition of allowance. Claims 2-4, which are directed to a nonelected invention, depend from allowable Claim 1 and, thus, are eligible for rejoinder. MPEP 821.04.

A. Rejection of Claims 1, 6-12, 15 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1, 6-12, 15 and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kudo et al. (JP 07-1682930, “Kudo”) for the reasons of record.

Claims 13-14 stand objected to as being dependent from a rejected Claim. It was stated that they would be allowable if rewritten in the independent format.

Claim 14 depended from Claim 1, and Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate all of the limitations of Claim 14, bringing it in condition of allowance. Therefore, the amendment to Claim 1 renders the §102(b) rejection of Claim 1 and its dependent claims moot. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of Claims 1, 6-12, 15 and 17.

B. Rejection of Claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claim 18 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kudo in view of the patent to Kiyohara et al. (USP 4,877,819).

Claim 18 depends from Claim 1. As discussed above, the amendment to Claim 1 brings Claim 1 into the condition of allowance. Therefore, Claim 18, which depends from Claim 1, is now allowable.

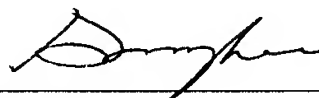
Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Masanobu TAKASHIMA, *et al.*
Appln. No. 10/727,996
Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Sunhee Lee
Registration No. 53,892

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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